

# CARTHUSIAN SAINTS

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**By a Carthusian monk**



OUR LADY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN  
WITH CARTHUSIAN MONKS

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**Charterhouse of the Transfiguration  
2006**



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## CARTHUSIAN BOOKLETS SERIES, N° 8

# **CARTHUSIAN SAINTS**

BY A CARTHUSIAN MONK  
2006

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## INTRODUCTION

The Carthusian Order has never been eager to have its members, even men and women of manifest holiness, canonized; “Be a Saint rather than be called one”, as the Carthusians used to say. The hidden life continues even after death, in the cemeteries of our Charter-houses.

However, some have been recognized as Saints or Blesseds by the Church. Usually this took place by a so-called ‘equipollent’ or ‘equivalent canonization’: “An authorization of public veneration pronounced by the Pope in consequence of the existence of certain special conditions” (D. Attwater).

In several cases what brought the Carthusian’s holiness to light was that he was taken from the cloister to become a Bishop. It was a widespread practice in the Middle Ages to choose Bishops among the monks from the religious Orders. The monks accepted out of obedience to the Pope and their Superior General.

To avoid misunderstandings we inform the reader that nowadays it would be inconceivable for a Carthusian monk to become Bishop.

*Since our Order is totally dedicated to contemplation, it is our duty to maintain strictly our separation from the world; hence, we are excepted from all pastoral ministry — no matter how urgent the need for active apostolate is — so that we may fulfill our special role in the Mystical Body of Christ.*  
(Statutes of the Carthusian Order)

The Church not only knows and respects this, but encourages the Carthusian Order to remain faithful to its specific mission “of gratuitous contemplation and intercession for the Church and for the world” (Pope John Paul II in a letter to the Order, May 2001).

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In this brochure we present sixteen Saints or Blesseds or groups of Saints (Martyrs) of the Carthusian Order, officially recognized as such by the Church. We have arranged them in alphabetical order.



The date following the name of the Saints and Blesseds in the titles is the date of their death, called in Latin *dies natalis*, which means their date of birth into eternal life. This is usually the date we celebrate them in our liturgy.

Before we begin, let us note, however, that all our hermitages are dedicated in the first place to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, our principal heavenly patrons.

### ***Editor's Note***

We give here some information on three Charterhouses, which are mentioned more than once in our brochure. They are the oldest houses of the Order and still exist today.

1) The **Grande Chartreuse**, Mother house of the Order, near the city of Grenoble in Southeastern France, founded by Saint Bruno in 1084. The mountain ridge where the monastery was built, is called in Latin *Cartusia*; *Chartreuse* is a French version of *Cartusia* and became the name of the monastery itself, today known as the 'Grande Chartreuse'; the English corruption of *Chartreuse* yields 'Charterhouse'.

2) The **Charterhouse of Calabria**, or Serra San Bruno, in Southern Italy, also founded by Saint Bruno, in 1090.

3) The **Charterhouse of Portes**, near the city of Lyons, in Southeastern France, founded in 1115. Portes is renowned in our tradition as the 'Charterhouse of the Saints': Anthelm, Artold, Ayrald, and Stephen of Die began their monastic life at this House.

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**1.**  
**SAINT ANTHELM**  
**- FRANCE -**  
**(JUNE 26, 1178)**

Anthelm of Chignin was born into a noble family of Savoy, France, in 1107. He chose the ecclesiastical state, became a canon and received important prebends and dignities (1). Nevertheless, by the grace of God, he refused to find his joy in these exterior possessions and human glory. He had a brother who was Procurator at the Charterhouse of Portes. Conversations with his brother when he visited him and with the Prior convinced him of the excellence of Christian abnegation in the monastic life. He asked for the Carthusian habit (2) at Portes in 1135 and soon surpassed the other monks there in the monastic virtues.

This came to the ear of the superior of the Grande Chartreuse, Guigo, who asked the Prior of Portes to send Anthelm to the Mother house, where an avalanche had killed seven of the monks a short time earlier. So it was at the Grande Chartreuse that Anthelm made profession. Under Guigo's successor, Hugh, Anthelm was made Procurator. He humbly accepted this charge, although he did not feel any attraction to it, and fulfilled his office with much profit for the House without overlooking his own spiritual needs.

When a new Prior was needed, the community, by a unanimous vote, elected Anthelm (1139). As Prior, he rebuilt the Mother house at a site less susceptible to avalanches. But his principal endeavor was the spiritual progress of the community which soon experienced his firmness, tenderness, wisdom and humility. He visited his monks with frequency in their cells and the gentleness of his words filled their hearts with peace. The



sick, both in body and soul, had the particular interest of his fatherly care. He had a special gift in providing a remedy for temptations and in animating those who were discouraged. As regards those who were proficient in the spiritual life, he judged them worthy of all honors. He showed to them all the proofs of perfect esteem even going as far as to give them the right of way as they passed by and to stand up in their presence.

It was during his priorate that the wish was expressed by the Priors of the other Charterhouses for a more stable and more structured organization of the Order in the form of an annual General Chapter. Anthelm was open to this and welcomed the first General Chapter at the Grande Chartreuse in 1140. After the foundation by Saint Bruno in 1084, this first General Chapter was like a 'second starting point' for our Order.

Humble as he was, he repeatedly asked to be dismissed as Prior. After twelve years, in 1151, he finally obtained this. But as the Prior of Portes had died at that time, the monks of Portes asked Basil, Anthelm's successor as superior of the Mother house, to send them the latter as their new Prior. Anthelm had to accept this. During his priorate storms destroying the harvest in the region of Portes caused a scarcity of food. Anthelm distributed generously wheat and vegetables from the monastery storage rooms to the farmers. He also came to the financial aid of other monasteries.

Two years later the diocese of Belley, (3) in which Portes is located, needed a new Bishop. The people there strongly wanted Anthelm to become the Bishop. He refused, but to no avail. Pope Alexander III ordered him to accept and ordained Anthelm in 1163. As Bishop he offered great services to the Church. Within the first year of his consecration he launched a reform of the clergy. He defended the rights of the Church against the powerful. A bitter conflict with Humbert, count of Savoy, ended with Humbert asking the holy Bishop's forgiveness, which the latter granted him with great benig- nity.

He kept up the same monastic fervor as before. Every year he would withdraw for a few days at the Grande Chartreuse, where he had a cell like the other monks.

Recommending charity and concord to his priests, Saint Anthelm died on June 26, 1178, having been a Bishop for eighteen years. Because of the many miracles at his tomb he was soon venerated. Today he is the patron Saint of the diocese of Belley, where the cathedral preciously keeps his relics. His feast is kept both by the Carthusians and the diocese of Belley on June 26.

## Prayer

*Lord our God, You love peace and unity. By the prayers of Saint Anthelm may we seek always Your kingdom and together praise You.*

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. Some technical terms belonging to ecclesiastical vocabulary: a) a 'canon' is a clergyman belonging to the chapter or the staff of a cathedral; b) a 'chapter' is a regular meeting of the canons of a cathedral, or the body of canons of a cathedral; c) a 'prebend' is a remuneration furnished by a cathedral to a clergyman, who is a canon in its chapter.
2. "Taking the Carthusian habit" is an expression which means joining the Carthusian Order, becoming a Carthusian; the 'habit' being the religious garb the monk wears.
3. Today this diocese is called 'Belley-Ars'.

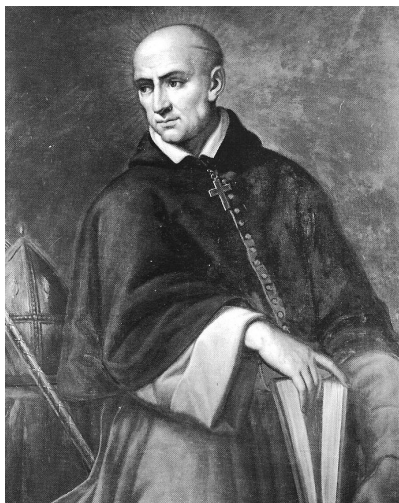
We have Anthelm's Life, written by his chaplain William, a Carthusian of Portes, in Latin with a French translation: *Vie de Saint Antelme: Évêque de Belley, Chartreux*, edited and translated by Jean Picard, Belley, 1978.

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## **2. SAINT ARTOLD - FRANCE - (OCTOBER 8, 1206)**

Saint Artold was born in the early twelfth century. The generally approved year of his birth is 1101. As he died in 1206, this makes him die very old indeed, at 105! What is certain is that as a young man he entered the renowned Charterhouse of Portes. Humble, recollected and pious, he so distinguished himself that he was soon judged worthy to carry out important pastoral tasks.

So in 1132 he was designated as the founder and first Prior of the Charterhouse of Arvières, in the diocese of Geneva. In order to accomplish this mission he chose from the lands of his family a vast solitude of extraordinary roughness, covered with snow for the most part of the year, and until then inhabited only by bears, foxes and



other animals. In this remote wilderness area Artold and his companions built some rudimentary wooden constructions and led an extremely austere life for ten years. Then one day, the Bishop of Geneva came to visit them. Very impressed, he found a more suitable site for them and urged well-to-do men of his diocese to contribute to the building of an appropriate monastery.

Artold was a good Prior for years, but then the Bishop of Belley, the diocese in which Portes is located, died. The clergy was unanimous that the Prior of Arvières, although at this time already advanced in age, ought to become the new Bishop. Terrified at this prospect, Artold fled and hid himself! However, he was found and had to accept. He accomplished all the duties of a Bishop in an exemplary way, but after a few years, in

1190, he managed to obtain his retirement, because of old age, from Pope Clement III.

He returned to Arvières, where he lived for still 16 more years! The best-known of all Carthusian Bishops, Saint Hugh of Lincoln, visited him in 1200. When they came together to converse with the community the former Bishop of Belley asked the Bishop of Lincoln to give the brothers an account of the peace treaty between the kings of England and France, since he knew that Hugh had been present when it was made. The latter replied, half seriously, half joking: “My Lord and Father, although it is legitimate for Bishops to hear and relate such matters, it is not so for monks. It is not right to bring news from outside into the cloister or the cell, and to leave the city in order to discuss secular matters in solitude.” Having said this, Hugh turned the conversation to a spiritual topic. Artold, in his humility, must have been edified by the remark and moved by its wisdom.

Artold died October 8, 1206. In his last words he recommended the community to have recourse to the Holy Spirit for light and comfort, to the most Holy Virgin for special protection, and to Saint Bruno as model. “Grow in virtue”, he said to them, “in order that the sanctity of this House may last forever, passing on its good traditions to those who come after you. Love one another that charity may be the bond at all times uniting you to all in Jesus Christ.”

Miracles after his death corroborated his renown for holiness. In 1834 Gregory XVI authorized his feast for the diocese of Belley and in 1857 it was permitted to the Carthusians, who today celebrate him with other Carthusian saints on October 13.

## Prayer

*All-powerful God, with the help of Saint Artold's prayers may we so distinguish ourselves in this life's laborious struggle that we may obtain eternal rest.*

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### **3. BLESSED AYRALD - FRANCE - (JANUARY 2, 1146)**

Ayrald was born to noble parents in Southeastern France toward the end of the eleventh century. One tradition makes him a son of Count William of Burgundy. This would, if true, make him the brother of Archbishop Guido of Vienne who was elected Pope in 1119 and as Calixtus II governed the Church from 1119 to 1124. In any case, Ayrald spurned his wealthy background and entered still young at the Charterhouse of Portes. Since his novitiate he stood out among the other monks by his monastic virtues. No one could meet him without being attracted by his kindness, humility and obedience, which were the fruits of his continual union with God. Hence it was not surprising that eventually the community elected him Prior.



The little town of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, in the French Alps, was in those days a bishopric and needed a new Bishop. The cathedral chapter could think of no one they would rather have than Dom Ayrald, the renown of whose virtues had reached them. He, of course, recoiled, but the Pope and the secular overlord, the count of Savoy, insisted and thus overcame his hesitations.

As a Bishop, Ayrald was very faithful to his pastoral activities and succeeded to combine fidelity to his Carthusian monasticism with his new episcopal duties. He always wore his hair shirt and his white woolen habit and above all, he preserved a spirit of silence and solitude in the midst of the many concerns the spiritual and material administration of a diocese brings with it. Whenever possible, he would return to spend a few days at Portes, to give himself to prayer and fasting.

With extreme amiability he met the needs of the poor and received all those visited by misfortune, consoling them and attending to them through ample alms. Like Anthelm and Hugh of Lincoln, Ayrald was an ardent defender of the rights of the Church before the powerful secular leaders.

Prematurely worn out by the fatigues of his ministry Ayrald died in 1146, with the happiness and peace which always accompanies the death of the Saints. At his funeral occurred several miraculous cures. The faithful of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne expressed their admiration for the Bishop by placing the following epitaph on his tomb: "Here lies Ayrald, monk of Portes, honor of the pontificate, luminary of the Church, and father of the poor, glorious for his sanctity and for his miracles."

More miracles took place in the centuries that followed. Finally, in 1863 Pope Pius IX approved the cult (1) since time immemorial of "Blessed Ayrald, Bishop of Maurienne." He is now celebrated by the Carthusians on October 13, together with other Saints of the Order.

## Prayer

*Lord God, You called Blessed Ayrald to the monastic life and have given us in him an example of Your love. Help us to reach the heavenly kingdom by rejecting the world's temptations.*

### ***Editor's Note***

1. 'Cult' means religious veneration, worship.

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**4.**  
**BLESSED BEATRICE OF ORNACIEUX**  
**- FRANCE -**  
**(NOVEMBER 25, 1303)**

Beatrice of Ornacieux was born of noble lineage in the second half of the twelfth century, in Southeastern France. At thirteen, with the precocious maturity of medieval women, she joined the Carthusian nuns of Parménie, where she had for novice mistress Marguerite of Oyngt, a nun well known even today for the writings she has left us. She also wrote the life of her holy novice.

Beatrice was very charitable and patient, providing help to all the necessities of her sisters, working in the kitchen and the infirmary.



The Evil one tormented her with dreadful impure fantasies and nocturnal phantasms: ferocious animals and frightful noises. At first her reaction was to ask God to take her out of the exile of this earthly life, but a miraculous voice told her not to desire anything which would not accomplish the will of God. "Receive the consolations that I give you and refuse not the sufferings that I send you", the voice

added. From then on she abandoned herself into God's hands and she only wanted to do His will.

Beatrice was an ardent soul, aflame with love for her Bridegroom Jesus Christ. This love was the dynamic behind the life of penance she led to follow Christ as close as possible in his sufferings. He responded to her ardent love and sacrifices by granting her an intimate

knowledge of Himself. Later, however, the apparent abandonment of the Lord made her suffer very much. Eventually Beatrice enjoyed full union with God and regained her perfect peace of soul, never to lose it again.

In 1300, Parménie made a new foundation at Eymeux, also in the Southeastern France. Beatrice was chosen to be its foundress and Prioreess. There she died a holy death, November 25, 1309.

When the Order was not able to keep up Eymeux, her relics were brought to Parménie. The latter monastery had to be abandoned because of an uprising of the Albigensians. (1) Soon after the nuns fled from the monastery, the heretics burned the House, and the precious relics of Blessed Beatrice got lost in the rubbish of the destruction. Yet her cult was never to die, especially in our Order, where she was continually honored, as an abundant iconography shows us. In the seventeenth century a shepherdess of that region found the relics, and in 1697 Cardinal Le Camus declared that they were authentic. They were again inspected by the Bishop of Grenoble in 1839, with the opening of her tomb. In 1869 Blessed Pius IX permitted her feast (November 25) to be celebrated in the Carthusian Order.

## Prayer

*Father, Blessed Beatrice was a virgin consumed by love in imitating the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. With the help of her prayers and example may we arrive at eternal glory by sharing on earth in the sufferings of Your Son.*

### ***Editor's Note***

1. Albigensians, heretics of twelfth–thirteenth-century Southern France. They formed an ascetical and anti-sacerdotal party in permanent opposition to the Church of Rome.

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## 5. BLESSED BONIFACE OF SAVOY - FRANCE - (JULY 14, 1272)



Blessed Boniface is usually included among the Carthusian Saints, although his ties to our Order are rather questionable. He belonged to the princely House of Savoy, and in point of fact his tomb is among the 'royal tombs' of that House at the abbey of Hautecombe in Savoie, France. He is believed to have been for some time a novice in our Order, at the Grande Chartreuse. But not for long! Because of his reputation and capabilities he had to leave the

peace of the novitiate to become Bishop of Belley in 1234. He left the Mother house "in tears". From Belley he was asked to go to the more important see of Valence, also in Southeastern France. Finally Queen Eleanor of England, his close relative, obtained that he be named Archbishop of Canterbury. (1) He remained there for about twenty-five years. He died during a visit to his native Savoy. In 1838 the family of the princely House obtained from Gregory XVI the recognition of his reputation for holiness, because of the miracles that took place after his death. The Order remembers him, with its other Saints, on October 13.

### Prayer

*Lord, You saw fit to make Boniface an example of pastoral zeal and love. With his help, may we in our solitude contribute towards the salvation of souls.*

\*

Modern history has discovered in Blessed Boniface a Churchman of large stature. We add to this biographical sketch some passages of the appraisal of Boniface by Leland Edward Wilshire:

*The major impression that one gathers is that Boniface was a man who through his public life, especially as Archbishop of Canterbury, became deeply involved in what he saw as the reform of the Church....*

*Although he was in continual conflict with the king over the liberty of the Church, there was a continual attempt to come to an arbitrated settlement. His letters to the king and queen are warm and personal. The continual repetition of reaching settlements with the king over finances and having him pledge again and again to respect the liberties of the Church, would point to a very patient approach by the Bishop. Even when stronger measures were taken to protect the Church, leading to the Constitutions of Lambeth in 1261, the steps were taken in a deliberate and proper fashion....*

*The main concern of Archbishop Boniface was for the reform of the Church from an internal renewal, through pastoral oversight, to the external attempts to free the Church from political influences on the outside that were hindering reform....*

*There have been those Carthusians who have expressed their spiritual witness by taking their final vows and withdrawing from the world. Boniface of Savoy attempted to be a witness for the Carthusian inspired reform in the shifting and tumultuous currents of the outside world. The stand taken by this prelate should not be left in obscurity but should be known and emulated. (2)*

### **Editor's Notes**

1. Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III.
2. Wilshire, Leland Edward, *Boniface of Savoy: Carthusian and Archbishop of Canterbury, 1207-1270* (Analecta Cartusiana, 31), Salzburg, 1977, p. 84-87, "An appraisal of Boniface of Savoy..." Wilshire notes that "The Constitutions of Lambeth and other formal legislation that came out of the conflict of the Archbishop and the king were used by the English Church for generations in their continual struggle for the freedom of the Church... The Consti-

*tutions of Archbishop Boniface are still part of the canonical structure of the Anglican Church” (p. 86).*

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### **6. SAINT BRUNO FOUNDER OF OUR ORDER - GERMANY - (OCTOBER 6, 1101)**

Saint Bruno, our holy founder, is definitely the most important of the Carthusian Saints. He was born in Cologne, Germany, probably in the late 1020s. As a young man he went to Rheims in France, a town renowned as center of higher learning. In 1049 Pope Leo IX convoked at Rheims a Council for Church reform. Bruno must have been there as a young student at the time. In 1056 the Master of studies at Rheims retired and Bruno, though not yet thirty, succeeded him. He was also a canon at the cathedral. Future Abbots and Bishops, and even a future Pope, Urban II, were among his students.

However, difficulties came when a new Archbishop was installed in 1067. This man, called Manasses, turned out to be rather corrupt. It was widely understood that he financially bought the office of Bishop. This great crime of simony was very widespread at that time. Bruno and a few other canons opposed themselves against Manasses. In retaliation Manasses deprived them of all their dignities and Bruno had to seek refuge with a local count at the end of 1076. Manasses made several attempts to justify himself: before a papal legate, a local Council, and the Pope himself. In doing so he always tried to discredit Bruno by name, whose uprightness and integrity were a thorn in his flesh. But finally, in 1080, Gregory VII ordered the clergy of Rheims to send away Manasses and elect a worthy Archbishop. “Master Bruno” (in Latin *Magister Bruno*), as he was known, the famous scholar, now in his fifties, would be the right man for it. However, in the meantime God had spoken to his heart a totally different vocation: seeking Him alone, through prayer, in silence and solitude.

Bruno left us a vivid account of this call to solitude in a letter to his friend Raoul:

*You remember, after all, the time that you and I, and Fulk One-eye, were together in the little garden adjoining Adam's house, where I was staying at the time. We had been discussing for some while, as I recall, the false attractions and ephemeral riches of this present life, and comparing them with the joys of eternal glory. As a result, we were inflamed with divine love, and we promised, determined and vowed to abandon the fleeting shadows of this world at the earliest opportunity, and lay hold of the eternal by taking the monastic habit. (1)*

He first left with two companions for a place called Sèche-Fontaine, but eventually these two abandoned the solitary life. Then he went with six other companions to the diocese of Grenoble, in the French Alps, rather far from Rheims. Perhaps he had been attracted by its young Bishop, Hugh, who had the reputation of being a 'friend of monks'. The latter had a dream in which he saw seven stars rising over a place called *Chartreuse*, high up in the mountains of his diocese. When Bruno and his six companions arrived, the dream's meaning became clear to the Bishop, and he led them up to that place. (2) This was in 1084 on the feast of Saint John the Baptist. They built their monastery, the first 'Charterhouse', which consisted of wooden huts joined together by a gallery leading to a stone church.

God blessed their undertaking and all went well. But a tremendous trial awaited Bruno. His former student Eudes, who in the meantime had become Pope Urban II, remembered the one who had been his teacher at Rheims. He sent a messenger to him and called him to Rome, in 1090. This looked like the end of Bruno's foundation. In fact, his companions were so discouraged that they wanted to separate. But Bruno, Saint that he was, obeyed the Pope and left for Rome. At the disposition of the Pope, Bruno lived as monastically as possible. Then, when the Pope had to flee to Southern Italy, he brought Bruno with him. In autumn 1090, Bruno was able to found a monastery there, in Calabria. This was the second 'Charterhouse'.



After a moment of discouragement, his former companions in the diocese of Grenoble had resumed their life at *Chartreuse*. They needed guidance from Bruno, their founder. In 1099 their Prior Landuin made the long journey to Calabria to confer with him. The letter for the community that Bruno sent back with Landuin is a marvelous example of spiritual wisdom.

“Master Bruno” was renowned for his religious fervor and his learning, a model of virtue, dignity and maturity. Guigo, his fourth successor as Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, called him “a man of understanding heart”. An exceptional goodness radiated from him, and Goodness was the trait above all that Bruno is said to have loved to contemplate and praise in God. Hence his favorite exclamation was *O Bonitas!* (‘O Goodness of God’).

Bruno died October 6, 1101, and his disciple Lanuin succeeded him as superior in Calabria. In 1510, Pope Leo X declared Bruno a Saint by ‘equipollent’ canonization. (3) The day of his death, October 6, is the date of his feast in the calendar of the Universal Church.

## Prayer

*All-powerful, eternal God, You prepare dwelling places in heaven for those who renounce the world. Through the intercession of our founder, Saint Bruno, may we faithfully fulfill the obligations of our monastic consecration, and thereby be enabled to attain those things which You have promised to all who persevere in Your love.*

✱



At Bruno's death his monks composed the following poem in Latin:

*Laudandus fuit Bruno  
in multis et in uno.  
Vir fuit vitæ æqualis  
vir in hoc specialis.*

*Semper erat festo  
vultu, sermone modesto  
Cum vigore patris  
monstravit viscera matris.*

*Nullus eum magnum  
sed mitem sensit ut agnum,  
Prorsus in hac vita  
verus fuit Israelita.*

*(Bruno deserves to be praised for many things, but especially for this: his life was always the same. That was typical of him. He always had a smile on his face, always had a prudent word. To the severity of a father he joined the tenderness of a mother.*

*Great he was, but everyone found him gentle as a lamb. In truth, he was the Israelite praised in the Gospel.)*

The last strophe refers to John 1:47, where Jesus says of Nathanael: "Here is a true Israelite. There is no guile in him."

\*

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. Only two letters of Saint Bruno have come down to us: one to the community of the Grande Chartreuse, and one to his friend Raoul at Rheims, who reneged on the promise he had made to become a monk. Together the two letters give us the portrait of an authentic spiritual master and a great Saint.

The standard hagiography of Bruno is: André Ravier, S.J., *Saint Bruno the Carthusian*, Charterhouse of the Transfiguration, Arlington, Vermont, 2004.

2. This dream was later embodied in our Carthusian emblem, shown on the inside back cover of this brochure.

3. See the Introduction to this brochure.

\*

The future Saint Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, played an important role in the foundation of the Grande Chartreuse and throughout the whole beginning period of our Order. That is why, although not a Carthusian, he is sometimes called the ‘co-founder’ of the Carthusian Order. He became Bishop of Grenoble in 1080, at the age of 27 and died in 1132. In 1084 he received Bruno and his six companions and led them to the mountains of Chartreuse. Once the monastery built, he used to spend much time with the monks, living in a cell and not shying away from the simplest everyday jobs. Indeed, he developed such a taste for life in solitude that Saint Bruno often had to send him gently away, saying: “Pastor, return to your sheep.” When around 1120 several Priors asked Guigo, the fifth prior of the Grande Chartreuse, to write a Rule, Hugh supported their request with his authority. Guigo later wrote Hugh’s life, which we still have. The Carthusians celebrate Hugh’s feast April 22, using the following prayer: “Father, through Saint Hugh You manifested the Church’s pastoral care for our first founders. Through his intercession may our Order continue to flourish.”

### ***Editor’s Note***

The life of Hugh by Guigo, in French translation: Guigues le Chartreux, *Vie de Saint Hugues, Évêque de Grenoble, Ami des moines* (Analecta Cartusiana, 112:3), translated from the Latin by Marie-Ange Chomel, Salzburg, 1986.

### **N**

**7.**  
**BLESSED MARTYRS**  
**DOM CLAUDE BEGUIGNOT**  
**AND DOM LAZARUS TIERSOT**  
**- FRANCE -**  
**(JULY-AUGUST 1794)**

On October 1, 1995, Pope John Paul II beatified sixty-four priests martyred in 1794-1795, during the French Revolution. They belonged to fourteen French dioceses and twelve religious Institutes.



Two of them, Blessed Claude and Blessed Lazarus, were Carthusians. These priests, for refusing to take the revolutionary oaths opposed to the Church, were in the spring of 1794 forced to embark on two former slave ships anchored at the mouth of the Charente River, at Rochefort. They were massed together in the most appalling conditions and, in addition, treated with brutality by the crew, forced to

stand all day and virtually starved. After ten months, all of the sixty-four had died. Their total trust in God is evident in this phrase uttered by one of them: "If we are the most unfortunate of men, we are also the happiest of Christians." The Holy Father said in his homily:

*This morning, dear brothers and sisters, we are thinking of the sixty-four French priests who died on the 'decks of Rochefort'. They experienced a long Calvary for remaining faithful to their faith and to the Church. If they died, it is because they did all they could to affirm their close communion with Pope Pius VI.*

There were more priests on the boats than the sixty-four, several hundred, among whom were eight other Carthusians. However, Rome wanted to limit the beatification to those whose individual and holy deaths are attested to in documents.

After his Charterhouse of Bourg-Fontaine was suppressed by the Revolution, Dom Claude Beguignot (born 1736) withdrew to Rouen. April 1793 he was arrested and put on one of the boats. During their ordeal Dom Claude was the one the sick turned to for help. A priest who survived witnessed as follows to the monk's manifest holiness: "The very view of this man inspired the love of mortification. You never tired of hearing him speak of God. He did it so worthily and with such unction." Dom Claude died July 16, 1794.

Dom Lazarus Tiersot (born 1739), professed and Vicar (1) of the Charterhouse of our Lady of Fontenay, withdrew to the town of Avalon at the suppression of his monastery. He was arrested in April 1793, and put on one of the boats. "He impressed the other priests as a Saint", says one who survived. He passed away August 10, 1794, having predicted his death.

The Order celebrates Dom Claude and Dom Lazarus on August 5, together with other Martyrs of the Order, who are Saints or Blesseds. (2)

We commemorate several other Carthusians killed because of their loyalty to the faith and the Church:

- § other Carthusians, victims of the French Revolution, not yet beatified;
- § the Carthusians of Prague, killed by Hussites in 1421;
- § Dom Justus van Schoonhoven, sacristan of the Charterhouse of Delft (The Netherlands), martyred by Calvinists, in 1572;
- § the monks of the Charterhouse of Roermond (The Netherlands), also martyred by Calvinists, in 1572;
- § the Prior and a donate brother of Montalegre, killed in Barcelona during the Spanish civil war, in 1936;
- § the twelve Carthusians of Farneta, near the city of Lucca, Italy, shot by a contingent of SS Nazis because they had given refuge to Jews and Italian partisans on the 'wanted list' of the German army, in 1944.

## Prayer

*Father, strengthen our hearts, so that just as our brothers consummated their solitary life by bearing all their sufferings for the Church, so may we, dwelling hidden before Your face, be led to perfect love.*

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. In the Carthusian Order, the sub-prior is known as the 'Vicar'.
2. Except for the English Carthusian Martyrs under Henry VIII who are celebrated on May 4.

## N

### **8.**

### **ENGLISH CARTHUSIAN MARTYRS (MAY 4, 1535 TO NOVEMBER 4, 1541)**

The Martyrs of our Order in England — Saints John, Augustine and Robert and their Blessed companions, to be entirely correct — were victims of the persecutions under King Henry VIII. His unlawful marriage to Anne Boleyn put him in conflict with the Church. In early 1535 he had Parliament pass an “Act of Supremacy” making him Head of the Church of England. Those who remained loyal to the Pope were to be considered guilty of high treason. The Prior of the London Charterhouse, John Houghton, together with two other Carthusian Priors who happened to be in London at that time, Robert Lawrence of Beauvale and Augustine Webster of Axholme, (1) went to see the king’s vicar, Thomas Cromwell, to ask to be excused from the unlawful oath of loyalty. In response, they were imprisoned in the Tower of London. They were tried, and the same royal official bullied the jury into declaring them guilty of high treason, for which the punishment was to be “hanged, drawn and quartered.”



On May 4, 1535, together with Richard Reynolds, a Bridgettine priest, (2) and John Haile, a secular priest, they were dragged lying bound on a “hurdle” (3) through the muddy streets of London to Tyburn, the place for execution of criminals. These five were the very first of the many Catholics to be martyred for the faith in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. They were first hanged, then cut down when still half alive, disemboweled and cut into four pieces, all the while praying for their executioners.

After their holy deaths, the question for the London Carthusian community was: shall we follow our holy Prior? Some thought that with some mental restriction they could swear the oath of supremacy “in order to save our monastery”, but most of the community took the right decision. Seven cloister monks and six brothers, thirteen in all, suffered mar-



tyrdom, some of them in the same way as the three Priors, but others died from ill-treatment in prison, thus being spared from the gruesome ordeal. The three Priors are among the “forty Martyrs of England and Wales” canonized by Paul VI; the others are Blesseds. We celebrate the English Carthusian Martyrs on May 4.

Brother William Horn deserves particular mention. He was imprisoned in Newgate Prison in London, with nine other Carthusians, in 1537, to be starved to death. Only William survived and was transferred from Newgate to the Tower, eventually winning his martyr’s crown by being “hanged, drawn and quartered” at Tyburn on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1540.

## Prayer

*All-powerful God, You sanctified by martyrdom John and his companions because of their fidelity to the Pope. Following the example of their unshakeable attachment to the unity of the See of Peter, may we be able thus to serve You in peace.*

### ***Editor’s Notes***

1. In pre-Reformation England, the Carthusian Order had no less than ten monasteries.
2. Bridgittines: a religious Order founded by Saint Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373).
3. A ‘hurdle’ is a frame or sled without wheels, formerly used in England for dragging traitors to execution.

## N

**9.**  
**SAINT HUGH OF LINCOLN**  
**- ENGLAND -**  
**(NOVEMBER 16, 1200)**

Hugh of Avalon was born to noble parents in Southeastern France in 1140. Showing inclinations for the ecclesiastical state from childhood, his father, rather than bringing him up at home in his castle, entrusted him for upbringing to a monastery of canons regular in the neighborhood. There the canon who was given this responsibility loved the boy tenderly. “*Hugonete*” he would say, “*Hugonete, Christo te enutrio*” (“Little Hugh, it is for Christ that I bring you up”). And in fact, when still a teenager, as was not unusual at that time, he made profession as a canon in his turn.

Up in the mountain chain next to his priory, however, there was a monastery founded some sixty-five years earlier: the Grande Chartreuse. Hugh heard about it, and after visiting was spellbound: that was the place for him!

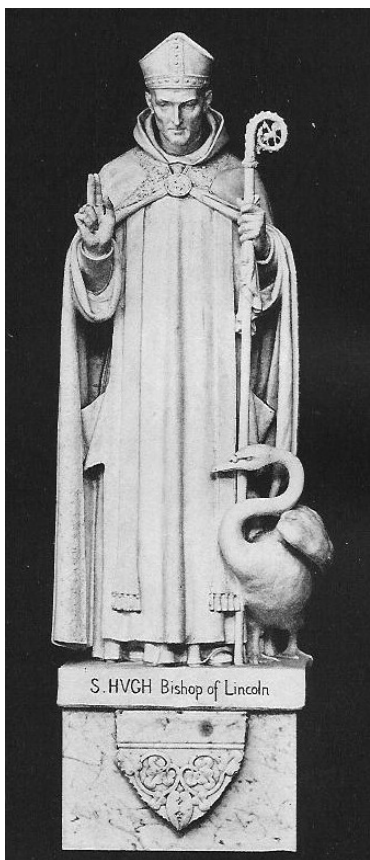
*Their rule encouraged solitude, not isolation. They had separate cells but their hearts were united. Each of them lived apart, but had nothing of his own, and did not live for himself. They combined solitude with community life. They lived alone lest any should find his fellows an obstacle to him; they lived as a community so that none of them should be deprived of brotherly help.*

Thus his biographer sums up Hugh’s impressions of the life in the Charterhouse. (1) Although the Prior of the canons entreated him with tears to wait until after his death, Hugh understood that God wanted him to leave right away, and was accepted at the Grande Chartreuse. He had a difficult novitiate, marked by many temptations stirred up by the Evil one, but Hugh resisted victoriously. After his profession he was appointed Procurator and held that office for ten years.

King Henry II of England (1154-1189) had promised to build a Carthusian monastery in England in compensation for having failed to



go on the Crusade imposed as a penance for the murder of Saint Thomas Becket. (2) He had found a suitable property for the monks, Witham, in the diocese of Bath. But who should be the Prior? A Frenchman advised him to ask the Grande Chartreuse for the renowned Procurator there. The king agreed and sent the Bishop of Bath on that errand. The community was not very willing to give its Procurator up but at last consented. So Hugh went to England for the



rest of his life. His relationship with the king was good, and he was not at all afraid to say what he meant. In order to construct the buildings of the monastery it was necessary to use some of the land which was rented out to local people. Saint Hugh compelled the King to reimburse the tenants in full for their inconvenience.

In 1186 the diocese of Lincoln needed a Bishop and the Prior of Witham was, at the king's suggestion, elected by the cathedral chapter. Of course he refused, saying he could only accept if the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse told him to. A delegation from the diocese did not hesitate to sail over to France, travel to the French Alps and obtain the authorization. His ordination as Bishop took place in Westminster Abbey, London.

As Bishop (1186-1200) he was a friend of the poor. A chief royal forester who was a notorious oppressor of the poor soon came into conflict with Hugh who came to their rescue and did not relent, even when the man got the king on his side. He also was remarkable in his charity for the lepers, established several leprosaria in his diocese, visited them and even embraced them. Hugh was prominent in trying

to protect the Jews, great numbers of whom lived in Lincoln. He put down popular feelings against them in several places.

He had no scruple in following the custom of the times and admitting married women and widows to sit at his table; his biographer tells how he would sign their foreheads with the sign of the Cross as they knelt before him and gently press their heads between his two palms.

*“God”, he would say, “well deserves to be loved by women, for He did not shun to be born of a woman. Marvelous and precious was the privilege He thus gave to all women. It was not granted to a man to be or to be called father of God, but it was given to a woman to bear God.”* (3)

Hugh rarely left the Diocese, became personally acquainted with all his clergy, held regular canonical visitations and was most careful to choose men worthy of the care of souls. Once a year he returned to Witham Charterhouse to give himself to prayer.

As pointed out already, with the kings Hugh was absolutely fearless. (During his episcopacy England had Henry II till 1189, then Richard The Lion-Heart, 1189-1199, then John Lackland from 1199.) He stood up to Richard’s violent temper when everybody else was afraid. In 1194 Saint Hugh excommunicated John Lackland. (4) Saint Hugh did not have a stern and gloomy character. His fearlessness made him relaxed when he was with kings. With a witty repartee he knew how to turn the royal anger into laughter.

Another element of his life still should not be left out: Hugh had a special affinity with animals. Birds and squirrels seemed attracted to his company. The most famous example of this affinity is the swan in his manor at Stow. This swan became both a pet and watchdog. From medieval to modern times artists have depicted Hugh with his pet swan. (5)

He had poor health and in 1200 he had a premonition that his time was running out. He made a pilgrimage to the places in France where he had spent the first part of his life: the Grande Chartreuse, the castle Avalon where he was born, and the canons regular. As we saw above, he also visited Saint Artold at Arvières. After returning to England, he did indeed become ill and died in London on November

16, 1200. At his death he was mourned by all, especially by the Jews, whom he had always defended and befriended. His funeral bier was carried by the kings of England and Scotland.

Miracles happened immediately and his cause for canonization was introduced. He was the earliest of all Carthusian saints to be canonized (1220). He is remembered not only by Carthusians but also by Anglicans of the diocese of Lincoln, who are now in possession of the beautiful Lincoln cathedral begun by Hugh. Our present Charterhouse in England, Saint Hugh's in Sussex, is dedicated to him and celebrates his feast, November 17, each year as a solemnity.

## Prayer

*Lord, You adorned Saint Hugh with outstanding virtues and the gift of working miracles. May we learn to imitate his virtues and be encouraged by his example.*

### **Editor's Notes**

1. When Hugh was Bishop he had as secretary a Benedictine monk who later wrote his life, a very interesting book-length account, which we still have: *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis (The life of Saint Hugh of Lincoln)*, Latin and English, edited by Decima L. Douie and David Hugh Farmer, 2 volumes, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961-1962. Other literature on Saint Hugh: Farmer, David Hugh, *Saint Hugh of Lincoln* (Cistercian Studies Series, 87), Kalamazoo, MI, Cistercian Publications, 1985; O'Malley, Vincent J., *Ordinary suffering of extraordinary Saints*, Huntington, IN, Our Sunday Visitor, p. 191-192; Lee, J.D., *Carthusians: An historical and spiritual study*, Devised and compiled from Carthusian sources, London, Henry VI Society, 1981, p. 47-49.

2. Thomas Becket c. 1118-1170; canonized 1173: chancellor of England (1155-62) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70) during the reign of King Henry II. His career was marked by a long quarrel with Henry that ended with Becket's murder in Canterbury cathedral.

3. Dom David Knowles, O.S.B., quoted in Lee, *Carthusians...*, p. 49.

4. *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, entry "Hugh of Lincoln".

5. See Farmer, *Saint Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 109-111.

**10.**  
**BLESSED JOHN OF SPAIN**  
**- SPAIN -**  
**(JUNE 25, 1160)**

Blessed John was born in 1123 in the kingdom of Leon in Spain. At the age of thirteen he left his country for France, both to escape the Moslems and for the purpose of studies. He settled in the town of Arles, in Southern France. At sixteen he felt drawn to the monastic life and entered a monastery in the vicinity. After some years, he heard about the recently founded Order of the Carthusians and their monastery of Montrieux (1) not far away, founded in 1118, 5 years before he himself was born. Drawn to their austere and entirely contemplative life, he joined the Carthusians there. Once a Carthusian, he was ordained a priest, was named sacristan and eventually — still a man in his twenties! — elected Prior. We may assume he was precocious on the natural level, but even more so by the early maturity of his virtues.

The nuns of the monastery of Prébayon in the vicinity, following the Rules of Saint Caesarius of Arles and of Saint Benedict, (2) were so impressed with the fervor of Montrieux under John's leadership that they asked to be admitted to our Order, which till then had consisted only of monks. The Prior of our Mother house, la Grande Chartreuse, and Superior General of the Order, Saint Anthelm, authorized this. He asked John to adapt the *Customs* of Guigo, which were our Rule at that time, to the nuns. He did so and this was the beginning of the female branch of our Order (1145).



Various difficulties at Montrieux lead to his retirement from the priorship and he moved to la Grande Chartreuse in 1150. Just then, a noble lord in neighboring Savoy asked for a monastery of Carthusians on his lands. Saint Anthelm saw in Blessed John the man of Providence. He sent him to make the foundation in Savoy, which was eventually given the name of le Reposoir (3). There he governed wisely as Prior for some years.

On June 25, 1160 John died, not yet forty years old. Through unusual circumstances he was interred not inside the enclosure, as the custom is, but outside. In fact, during his priorate, two servants of the monastery, having died in the mountains, under an avalanche of snow, had been interred in an inappropriate place, outside the enclosure, for which John had been reproved. To make amends he had made his monks swear that after his death, they would bury him at the same place as the two servants. This, however, permitted John's tomb — with his renown for sanctity — to become the object of popular pilgrimages. The faithful prayed at his tomb and many miracles occurred in the course of the centuries, particularly cures of malignant fever. In 1864 Blessed Pius IX approved the cult of Blessed John of Spain, venerated since time immemorial. The Carthusians celebrate his feast on July 14.

## Prayer

*God our Father, You called on Blessed John to help draw up a Rule for our nuns. May we who have eagerly embraced the monastic life arrive also at the perfection of charity.*

### **Editor's Notes**

1. This Charterhouse still exists today.
2. Saint Caesarius of Arles, c. 470-542, was a leading prelate of Gaul (France) and a celebrated preacher. Saint Benedict of Nursia, c. 480-c. 547, is the founder of the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino and Father of Western monasticism. The Rule that he established became the norm for monastic living throughout Europe. In 1964, in view of the work of monks following the Benedictine Rule in the evangelization and civilization of so

many European countries in the Middle Ages, Pope Paul VI proclaimed Saint Benedict the patron Saint of all Europe.

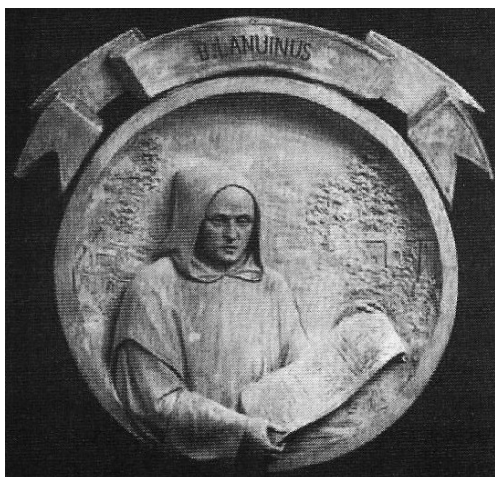
3. This House still exists but is today a monastery of Carmelite nuns.

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## **11. BLESSED LANUIN - GERMANY - (APRIL 11, 1120)**

Two men of a very similar name are among the early companions of our holy founder, Saint Bruno. Landuin (with a 'd') was the monk who, after Saint Bruno's departure for Rome (see Saint Bruno's life, above) and the dispersion of his first companions, led a group of monks back to the Grande Chartreuse, the cradle of our Order, and there became the second Prior. Lanuin (without a 'd'), of whom we now speak, was our founder's faithful companion all through his stay in Italy, assisted at his deathbed and became his successor at the Calabrian foundation.

This Lanuin was not one of the seven who had founded the first monastery with Bruno in France in 1084, but joined himself to that group three or four years later. Like Saint Bruno himself, he was a German. When in 1090 Saint Bruno was asked by Pope Urban II to leave his new foundation in the French Alps in order to help the Pope in Rome, Lanuin went with



him. Clearly our founder was impressed with his deep spirituality and unusual gifts. In Rome he lived with Saint Bruno and a few others as monastically as possible. When Saint Bruno was able to go to

Calabria, Lanuin went with him. From this time on, we see him appearing in the documents alongside Saint Bruno. Thus the deed from Count Roger gives the site for a monastery to “Bruno and Lanuin”. A papal bull of 1098 has “to our very dear and honorable sons, Bruno and Lanuin.” At Saint Bruno’s death, October 6, 1101, Lanuin was elected his successor as Prior, which Pope Paschal II warmly approved.

Known for his reputation as a holy and a prudent man, Urban II had already given to Lanuin an important mission at the service of the Church. Paschal II entrusted to him even more responsibilities, charging him among other things with the delicate mission of reforming monasteries of other Orders in the region. At this occasion the Pope wrote to Lanuin:

*The sanctity, the sincerity and the religious zeal of which you have given proof in the reform of churches and monasteries, urges us strongly to regard you in high esteem and to render acts of thanksgiving to the Almighty. We, then, are moved by your piety and to confide fully to your fervor, we exhort and oblige you to take to your charge the care of monasteries belonging to our jurisdiction, which are in your vicinity. Examine that in these there would be nothing contrary to the monastic discipline and enforce to reform all abuses with great moderation and discretion....*

Hence Paschal II constituted Lanuin arbitrator on all questions that pertain to the reform of the monasteries.

Great and many occupations did not impede the recollection of our Blessed and his high gift of contemplation. It has been said that exterior activities were imposed on him as a penance; while in solitude it was given him to experience how sweet the Lord is. Returning as promptly as he could to the silence of his desert, he gave to his monks an example of virtue and of perfect fidelity to monastic observance. What was admirable above all was his gentleness.

Surviving our holy founder by nineteen years, Lanuin died April 11, 1120 and was buried in Saint Bruno’s tomb, leaving behind a great reputation of sanctity. In 1893 the Holy Father Leo XIII officially confirmed the cult given to our Blessed since time immemorial. Since his feast in April so often came in Holy Week or Easter, the

Carthusians now celebrate him on October 13, together with other holy monks and nuns of the Order.

## Prayer

*Lord God, You called Lanuin to be one of Saint Bruno's companions in solitude. Through the merits of these our first fathers may we also reach the eternal glory of heaven.*

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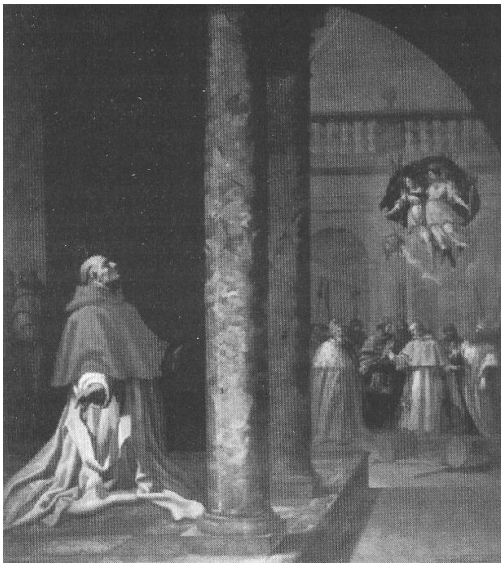
## 12. BLESSED NICHOLAS ALBERGATI - ITALY - (MAY 9, 1448)

Nicholas was born in Bologna, Italy, in 1375. Having obtained his degrees in law at the University of his native city, he was heading for a brilliant career in law, but a providential circumstance moved him to embrace the monastic life in our Order. Once visiting the Charterhouse of Bologna, he was detained by a storm and attended the night Office, or Matins, as the Carthusians call it. He was so impressed by the way the monks sang the Office that he could not but ask to be admitted among them. He made profession and was ordained a priest, always giving an excellent example of the monastic virtues. Unhesitatingly his fellow monks elected him their Prior in 1407, after he had been among them for twelve years.

Ten years later the diocese Bologna needed a Bishop. Nicholas was the one all the magistrates unanimously voted for! But he firmly declined. "Only if the Reverend Father Prior of the Grande Chartreuse orders me to accept, will I do so", he said. Undeterred, the city magistrates sent a delegation to the far-off monastery in France. Reverend Father Dom John Griffenberg consulted his community. All thought Dom Nicholas should accept. So he became Bishop, but did not abandon the monastic observance, practicing it in the same manner as when he was still in the cloister. He was devout, humble and depreciated what is only transitory. He wore the same rough habit as before,



with the hair shirt, observing all the fasts of the Order and making abstinence on bread and water on all Fridays. He had a deep interior life, spending long hours of prayer at night. Even in the midst of numerous religious and secular affairs which could have likely been obstacles, he was nonetheless able to live according to the spirit of our vocation. In everything he appeared as a true son of Saint Bruno.



But his services for the Church were not to remain limited to his diocese of Bologna. Two Popes, Martin V (1417-1431) and Eugene IV (1431-1447) used him in important roles for the good of the Universal Church. After a mission trying to make peace between France and England, he was given the cardinal's hat in 1426. As Cardinal "de Sancta Croce" (because his titular Church was Santa

Croce, Holy Cross, in Rome) he made peace between the duke of Burgundy and the king of France (peace of Arras, 1435). Later, at the Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence, he had a role of the very first order.

He always showed a profound humility, prudence and simplicity. But what most distinguished him was obedience. He did not forget that our founder Saint Bruno, in order to put himself under the immediate service of the Pope, had also left the desert of the Charterhouse, the place he cherished above anything else.

A trial struck him from his own townspeople, who rebelled against him as Bishop. He had to flee Bologna and took refuge with his fellow Carthusians in the Charterhouse of Florence. The Bolognese repented of their action however, and Pope Eugene IV insisted that Nicholas be restored to his see. Toward the end of his life,

he had only one wish: to return to the Charterhouse. He died however on a diplomatic mission to Siena, where he had to accompany the Pope in 1443. On May 9, he breathed his last in that city. After his death, he appeared to his assistant Tommaso da Sarzano and predicted to him that he would become Pope, which soon happened, for he became Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455). Three centuries later, Pope Benedict XIV, who had also formerly been archbishop of Bologna, confirmed the cult of our holy fellow Carthusian with Mass and Office in our Order and some Italian dioceses.

The Carthusians celebrate his feast today on October 13, together with other Saints and Blesseds of the Order.

## Prayer

*Lord, give us that simplicity of life by which Blessed Nicholas was able to persevere in the Carthusian ideal even in the midst of so many external cares.*

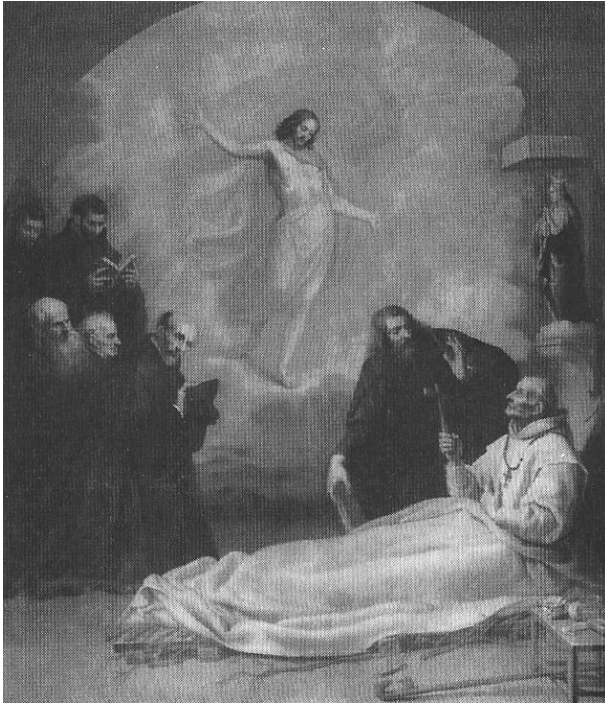
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## **13. BLESSED ODO - ITALY - (JANUARY 14, 1200)**

Odo, not to be confused with the better known Benedictine Saint of that name, had a most unusual life pattern. He was born in Novara in Northern Italy. We don't know what made him prefer to enter at the Carthusians' Mother house in the French Alps, the Grande Chartreuse. From there he was sent to Seitz in today's Slovenia, the Carthusian Order's first foundation in a Slavic country. He ended up Prior of the Charterhouse of Geirach in Austria, a little to the North of Seitz.

Very serious difficulties awaited him in the Austrian House. The local Bishop made life almost impossible for the Carthusians, eventually taking their land by violence and turning their monastery over to another Order. Odo saw no other solution than to go to Rome and

plead his cause before the Pope, Clement III (1187-1191). He also humbly asked the Pope to be discharged from his office of Prior, which he obtained.



Relieved of his pastoral duties, he returned to the Charterhouse of Geirach. On the way back, he lodged for the night at a monastery of Benedictine nuns, Tagliacozzo, in the Abruzzi Mountains, Italy. The nuns were impressed with the obvious holiness of the monk and asked him if he could not stay with them as chaplain and confessor? Odo refused this request, saying he had to return to his monastery. Now the Abbess happened to be the Pope's niece. She wrote at once to her illustrious uncle who acceded to her wishes. A solemn letter came from the Pope ordering Odo to stay for the rest of his life with the nuns as chaplain! This time there was no choice but to obey.

The nuns had a little cell made for him near the cloister. He was careful to observe his Rule, for example, never eating meat. After finishing his daily spiritual practices he served the monastery dedicating himself to manual labor, thus providing alms for the poor of the vicin-

ity. He left the solitude of his cell only to celebrate Mass or hear confession. For the nuns, he was exactly the holy chaplain and confessor they had thought he would be.

The situation lasted for ten years or so until his death, January 14, 1200. The old monk, transformed in Christ, had already done some miracles in his lifetime but did even more so after his death. Forty years after his death there was a movement to have him canonized, but Pope Gregory IX, who had been interested, died. In consequence of this the cause fell into oblivion, but not the devotion of the faithful. In 1859 Blessed Pius IX confirmed the cult of which Odo since time immemorial had been the object. The Carthusians celebrate him on October 13, together with other Saints of the Order.

## Prayer

*Lord, as we celebrate the feast of Blessed Odo, grant us to contemplate Your glory. By persevering faithfully on our way through life may we be rewarded by beholding You in the heavenly homeland.*

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## 14.

### **SAINT ROSALINE OF VILLENEUVE, VIRGIN - FRANCE - (JUNE 11, 1328)**

Rosaline belonged to the noble Southern French family of the 'de Villeneuve', which still exists today. She was born in 1263. When the Bishop of Fréjus gave her the sacrament of confirmation in 1270 in the chapel of the family castle, a supernatural light seemed to envelop the child. At a very young age she made a private vow of virginity. She loved more than anything else to take care of the poor, distributing generously from the family provisions, which alarmed the servants of the castle. Once, after having filled her skirt with bread, Rosaline was on her way to the poor grouped together at the doors of the castle. She was suddenly stopped by her father who asked her

what she was carrying. She answered: "These are the roses I just finished picking." Extending her skirt she showed the said roses to the astonished eyes of her father. It is to recall this miracle that Rosaline is often represented in portraits with her skirt full of roses.

When she was sixteen years old she wanted to become a Carthusian nun. She knew their life from the Charterhouse of la Celle-Roubaud close by, where her aunt Jeanne de Villeneuve was Prioress. Since that House had no novitiate, it was at Saint André de Ramires that she entered, and then she moved to the chief Charterhouse for women, Bertaud, not far from the city of Gap, in the French Alps. She made profession there in 1280.



Her aunt at Celle-Roubaud was getting on in age, so after a few years the Superior General of our Order permitted Rosaline to go to that House to help her aunt. In 1288 she received virginal consecration at the hands of the Bishop of Fréjus. (1) It is told that this grace put her into a state of ecstasy which lasted the whole day. Although she assisted in the choir and followed all the activities of the community, her soul was united with the Lord. She was known for her inclination towards asceticism.

For example, she reduced her sleep, and lived only on bread the days when she went to communion. (2) Prayer was for her most important in Carthusian life. Each night she used to spend long hours in prayer, thus obtaining special graces for the Order, her family and town, and for the entire Church. Owing to her purity of heart God granted her

the gift of reading what is in other people's heart. At the death of her aunt in 1300 the Superior General appointed Rosaline as Prioress. She held that office for twenty-nine years. It was during this time that her friend, the Bishop of Fréjus, became Pope as John XXII. (3)

She died at the age of sixty-six with a great renown for holiness. Immediately there were miracles: blind received their sight and sick were cured. Five years after her death, in 1334, Pope John ordered to open her tomb. Her body was found entirely incorrupt and it is still so today. In 1602 it was transferred from the crypt to a newly built chapel. In 1851 Blessed Pius IX authorized her feast for the diocese of Fréjus, and in 1857 for the Carthusian Order. Today, the Carthusians celebrate her on July 6, and her feast is a solemnity for the nuns of the Order.

## Prayer

*Lord God, for love of You Saint Rosaline trampled under-foot the flattering allurements of the world, that she might adhere only to You. Help us to follow her example and, turning away from things of earth, find our joy in sharing Your heavenly gifts.*

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. After their solemn profession Carthusian nuns may receive virginal consecration. Through this consecration the nun belongs in a new way to God and follows Christ more closely. She becomes a symbol of the union of Christ and the Church. The rite is accomplished by the Bishop who confers to the consecrated virgin the veil, the stole, and the ring, which are the exterior signs of her indissoluble union with the divine Spouse.
2. At that time, daily communion is not yet a custom.
3. Pope John XXII was one of the Popes of the so-called 'Avignon papacy', the Roman Catholic papacy during the period 1309–1377, when the Popes took up residence at Avignon (France) instead of at Rome, primarily because of the current political conditions.

**15.**  
**SAINT STEPHEN OF DIE**  
**- FRANCE -**  
**(SEPTEMBER 7, 1208)**



Stephen de Châtillon was born in Lyons into a well-known noble family in 1150. From early childhood he stood out as someone not made for the world and its pleasures. We know little about his early life, but at twenty-five he came to try the Carthusian life at the Charterhouse of Portes. He was favorably impressed and asked to be admitted. The monks accepted him gladly. He soon stood out for his great fervor and self-denial.

He radiated piety. When saying Mass, he had the gift of tears. The sight of a crucifix was sufficient to carry him into ecstasy. His spirituality can be summarized as follows: ardent devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the holy Eucharist, and to our Lady, and also zeal for the liturgy. All of his piety was manifested in a vibrant atmosphere of love of God and of neighbor. So it was not astonishing that when the Prior of Portes died, the monks elected Stephen as his successor. As Prior he fulfilled the expectations of the community, putting all his gifts into service of a prudent leadership, while maintaining his union with God. His reputation soon spread beyond the Charterhouse.

In 1202 the little French diocese of Die, not very far from Portes, needed a new Bishop. The officials of that diocese were unanimous in their choice of Stephen. At first he refused energetically, but when they drew his attention to the example of Hugh, the Carthusian Bishop of Lincoln in England, who had died two years earlier, he finally accepted. As Bishop he kept up monastic prayer and austerities,

while at the same time, by preaching and good example, he worked tirelessly and fruitfully for the salvation of souls. Just like other Carthusians who became Bishops, Stephen used to take a retreat from time to time in his monastery, refreshing mind and body in solitude. He always did so without showing in any way the high dignity with which he was invested.

He was well aware of the fact that the responsibilities of a Bishop are not without risks. That is why, although still only in his fifties, he said one day to a dying Carthusian brother: “Brother, this infirmity will take you to the Lord. When you are with Him, please pray for me and ask Him for the grace not to allow me to continue in my episcopal ministry.” Remarkably Stephen died twelve days after the brother died. He had been a Bishop for six years. After his death, there occurred so many miracles that in 1231 seven Bishops of that region wrote to Gregory IX asking for his canonization. He is celebrated with other Carthusian Saints on October 13.

## Prayer

*All-powerful God, it is not our frail body but our ardent spirit which can reach Your eternal glory. Make us, like Saint Stephen, strive always for those heavenly realms.*

N



**16.**  
**BLESSED WILLIAM OF FENOL**  
**- ITALY -**  
**(c.1200)**

William was born in the early twelfth century, in the township of Monferrato, in the diocese of Alba, in Northern Italy. His family was no doubt an ordinary, but very devout family. He was drawn to solitude and did in fact become a hermit. We may think that his life of prayer as a hermit deeply united him to God. However, a woman of ill repute came to disturb him in his hermitage. He was able to resist her temptations, but afterwards he realized that he needed the protection of a cloister.



So he took the road to the nearby Charterhouse of our Lady of Cazotto, Asti, and asked to be admitted as a brother. As brother William, he became an outstanding member of the community. He faithfully followed the observance of the Rule. He looked upon his superiors only with the eyes of faith and was always disposed to obey them immediately. The virtue by which he shone the most was that of simplicity. "If the eminent practice of virtue is admirable when joined to the splendor of doctrine, better still is its charm when it has for its company the ingenuity, the candor, the simplicity of soul. This simplicity must serve as the supreme wisdom especially for those called to live in the obscurity of the cloister" (statement of the Postulator; see note 1). How well Saint Bruno's words to the lay brothers of the Grande Chartreuse apply to William:

*As regards you lay monks, brothers so close to my heart, I have only this to say: My soul glorifies the Lord, since I can perceive the glories of His mercy toward you from the ac-*

*count of your beloved father and Prior, who boasts a great deal about you and rejoices over you. I share in this joy, since God in His power never ceases to inscribe on your hearts, however little education you may have, not only love, but understanding, of His holy law. For you show by your lives what it is you really love, and what you know. That is to say, when you are careful and zealous to observe a genuine obedience, conceived not only as the carrying out of God's commands, but as the original key to the spiritual life and its final stamp of authenticity, demanding as it does deep humility and outstanding patience, as well as sincere love for the Lord and our brothers, then it is clear that you are gathering with relish no less than the most delectable and life-giving fruits of Holy Scripture. (2)*

His simplicity of heart was a great preparation for contemplation. His piety focused on Christ crucified and he could not think of the Passion of our Lord without becoming deeply afflicted. And so, freed from all fear and earthly plans, his only desire was for Eternity, preparing himself for it with constancy until his death, which occurred around the year 1200.

He was buried in the cloister cemetery of the Charterhouse, but God let it emphatically be known that He wanted him to be buried at the gatehouse, outside the enclosure, so that the faithful could come to pilgrimage to his tomb. It is this popular veneration century after century, with accompanying miracles, which are the proof of the sanctity of this humble brother of whom we know so little. Pope Saint Pius V authorized the transfer of his relics in 1568, and Pope Blessed Pius IX authorized in 1862 the veneration of brother William, whose body was still incorrupt. His feast used to be December 16, but according to the spirit of Vatican II it has been moved outside of Advent and the Carthusians now celebrate him on May 24.

## Prayer

*Lord God, You are the nobility of the truly humble, and to serve You is to reign. May we imitate the simplicity of our brother Blessed William, and thus attain the kingdom You have promised to the lowly.*

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. The Postulator is an official who presents a plea for beatification or canonization in the Roman Catholic Church.
2. From Saint Bruno's letter to the monks of the Grande Chartreuse, France, written from the Hermitage Of The Tower in Calabria, Italy at about 1099.

### **N**

**Charterhouse of the Transfiguration  
Carthusian Monastery  
1800 Beartown Road  
Arlington, VT 05250  
Fax: 802-362-3584  
E-Mail: [carthusians-in-america@juno.com](mailto:carthusians-in-america@juno.com)  
[www.chartreux.org](http://www.chartreux.org)**









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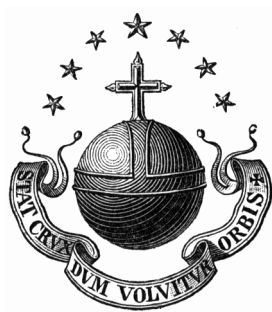
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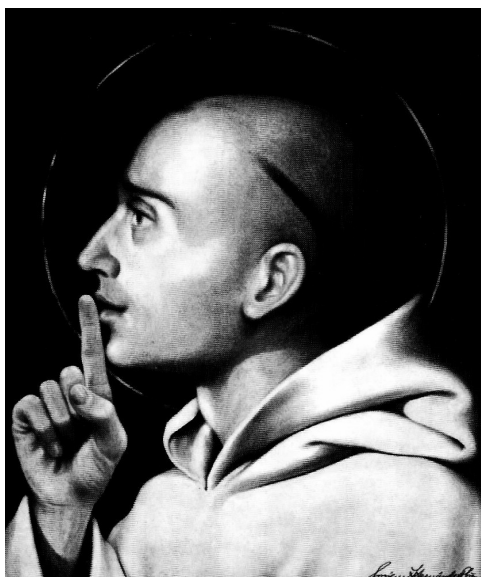
13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

A GLOBE SURMOUNTED BY THE CROSS

-“THE CROSS STANDS FIRM, WHILE THE WORLD TURNS”-

WITH SEVEN STARS SYMBOLIZING ST. BRUNO

AND HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS



SAINT BRUNO